

Documents on Diplomacy: The Source

"What Shall be Done with Spain?"

James Monroe to Thomas Jefferson, New York, June 16, 1786

Dear Sir;
What shall finally be done with Spain respecting the Mississippi becomes an interesting question, and one pressed on us for a decision. Gardoqui has been long labouring it's occlusion with Jay. For sometime I have been perfectly satisfied the latter required no arguments to bring him into the same sentiment; the proposition that it be shut for thirty years in consideration for which Spain will admit us into her ports upon a footing with her own subjects we reciprocating; this you may recall was rejected at Annapolis upon its own merits only: It is however magnified here as a great advantage & equivalent to the consideration required. We are also threatened with the prospect of a treaty between Spain (in case this fails) and Britain, yet I cannot comprehend upon what principle it can take effect. Jay stated difficulties in the management of this business with the minister & proposed, without bringing any of these circumstances to view that a committee be appointed with power to control all circumstances respecting the treaty with a view of evading his instructions & concluding the treaty before they were known—but as they were known to some who had marked the

progress of the business, each proposition was discussed on its own particular merits in the first instance. A Committee was appointed to report. Jay attended it; of this I was a member. To us he could make no communication we did not already know, so that the plan failed in not carrying a committee in the first instance for the purpose. This was a fortnight [*two weeks*] past & as yet we have made no report. I have given circumstantially the state of this business [as] it has appeared to me, not on evidence absolutely presumptive only. I intended to have wrote you more fully but am just advised the packet will sail immediately. With my sincerest wishes for your health & happiness I am, dear Sir, your friend & Obedient servant

JAMES MONROE

Source

The Emerging Nation: A Documentary History of the Foreign Relations of the United States under the Articles of Confederation, 1780-1789, Mary A. Giunta, Editor-in-Chief, Volume III. Washington, DC : Government Printing Office, 1996.

LC: Jefferson Papers, microfilm reel 5 (ALS)